

Charity-Schools Recommended:

K A

SERMON

Preach'd in

Several Churches

OF THE

CITY of LONDON.

By an hearty Lover of them, and of the
great Good which is done by them.

L O N D O N:

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John XV. Ver. 8.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit; so shall ye be my Disciples.

IN the Text is contained a Duty, placed between two Arguments to enforce it.

The Duty is, *To bear much Fruit.*

The Arguments to enforce it, are, *The glorifying of God, and the being Christ's Disciples.*

I begin with the Duty; *to bear much Fruit.* Now although I am sensible, that this Expression does in this Place denote all virtuous Actions, of what kind soever they be, and takes in the whole behaviour of a good Christian; because, without a universal Obedience to our Saviour's Commands, there could not be that good Agreement betwixt Christ and his Followers, as in this Chapter is elegantly set forth in the Parable of the Vine and the Branches; yet for the present, I shall not extend it so far, but shall make it to have Relation only to Charitable Deeds. And shall endeavour to shew, in what Respects the Charitable Man may be said to *bear much Fruit.* This being a Subject very suitable to the Occasion of our present Meeting.

I. The Charitable Man bears much Fruit, in that he endeavours, by all honest Ways and Means, to get and increase Wealth, on purpose that he may be better able to do Good to others, and to give more liberally to those who are in Want, both whilst he lives, and at his Death. Such

Such has been God's Kindness towards us, that he has not stinted us to any particular Quantity of these earthly Goods.

We may enjoy as much of them as we can get, provided we are not thereby made forgetful either of God, or our Neighbour.

It is lawful enough for us to gather Riches, provided we don't gather them either by Stealth and Knavery, or by pinching our selves, and starving our Families.

Provided they don't take up all our Thoughts and Time, and make us negligent in the Performance of Religious Duties.

And provided we can be willing to part with them when Occasion offers, for the Relief of others.

Although they are much to be blamed, who make the being Rich, to be the End of all their Actions, and therefore care not what unjust Arts and Methods they make Use of to obtain it. Yet, on the other Hand, they are much to be blamed too, who, when by their Labour and Industry, and a provident Regard to their present Circumstances, they might have advanced themselves, have been either negligent and slothful, or have wasted what they themselves had formerly gain'd, or was left them by their Ancestors, after a profuse and sinful Manner.

For such as these, who wilfully make themselves Beggars, do thereby become Burthens to the Common-Wealth.

They rob those who are real Objects of Charity, of what belongs to them.

And make unjust Incroachments upon the Estates of those who are forced to maintain them.

Now

Now the Charitable Man is aware how he becomes faulty in any of these Respects.

For, if he has an Estate left him, he is so far from squandering it away, that he makes Use of his utmost Skill, as far as he judgeth it to be consistent with Virtue and Piety, to keep and improve it.

If he is to make out his Fortunes himself, he then endeavours to find out the most likely Way of mending his Condition.

And, having chosen a Calling which does best agree with his present Circumstances, he employs all that Strength of Body, and Vigour of Mind, which God has given him, in the faithful Discharge of such Duties as belong to it.

And although he avoids all vain and unnecessary Expences, yet he lives according to his Quality, and never grudgeth to allow himself what is fit and convenient for One in his Station.

He is neither any Way dishonest, nor over-solicitous in the Management of his Affairs; but yet is very Careful and industrious, that so, if it be possible, he may procure to himself a comfortable Subsistence in the World.

And, instead of being a Charge to others, may be in a Capacity to lighten their Burthen, by bearing a Part in the Relief of such as are not able to subsist by themselves.

II. The Charitable Man bears much Fruit in that he always gives according to his Abilities, and that Success which his Labours have had towards the Increase of his Estate.

It is indeed impossible to determine, what Portion of his Income every one ought to bestow towards charitable Uses.

This

This must be left to the Prudence and Honesty of every particular Person.

But one Thing is certain, that every one, who has above wherewithal to provide Food and Raiment for himself and his Family, ought to give something, although it be never so little.

And he, whom God has raised out of a mean Condition, and blessed with a fair Estate, is obliged, out of mere Gratitude unto God, to be most liberal towards his indigent Servants.

This, the truly Charitable Person is rightly sensible of; and therefore wisely compares his present Circumstances with his present Income.

And what may be reasonably allowed, he cheerfully bestows.

He will be sure to give too much rather than too little; will chuse to live below his Quality, and to give his Children less Portions, rather than refuse to do Acts of Charity, when proper Occasions call for them.

And if he has been Poor himself, the Consideration of God's great Kindness, in mending his Fortune; quickens his Charity, and makes him willing to contribute more freely towards the Maintenance of those, who are in the same Condition as he himself once was.

III. The Charitable Man bears much Fruit, in that he gives to those who are the fittest Objects of his Charity.

Now these may be compriz'd under these Two Heads; *First*, The most Necessitous; *Secondly*, The most Virtuous.

First, The Charitable Man gives to the most necessitous. Although the truly charitable Man may

may give his Alms where he pleases; yet, being desirous to do as much Good as he can, he often prefers those who are in great Want, before those who are in less.

He gives sooner to those who have nothing of their own to depend upon, than he does to those who have something.

He relieves such as are not taken Care of by others, before those who are.

And he rather helps those who have whole Families to maintain, than such as are single Persons, and therefore more capable to help themselves.

But he has the greatest Regard to such as are sick; because he knows how tedious Sickness is.

And that although, when a Man is in Health, he may be able to grapple with great Difficulties, and to find out some Way or other of helping himself; yet, when he is laid up by any sore Disease, he cannot do it; and therefore to afford some comfortable Relief to such an one, must needs be one of the highest Instances of doing Good.

Secondly, The Charitable Man gives to the most *Virtuous*. When I placed the *Necessitous* before the *Virtuous*, I did not thereby mean, as if the Charitable Man did always prefer the most *Necessitous* before the most *Virtuous*. For I think that, unless in the Case of Starving, or some desperate Sickness, it is very fit to pass by oftentimes the most *Necessitous*, if they be really vicious.

For such ought to be made to smart for their Wickedness, and to want the Benefit of other Mens Alms, on purpose to make them sensible of their past Impieties.

Indeed

Indeed, when their Life is in Danger, all Considerations of their wicked Behaviour must be laid aside.

For their Amendment ought always to be design'd; and to suffer them to perish for want of Relief, is not the Way to mend them.

We must endeavour to keep them alive, on purpose, if it be possible, to reform them.

At such a Time therefore, the Charitable Man is never wanting towards them, but gives whatever he discovers to be necessary and convenient for them. But, at other Times, he picks out such to relieve, whose Carriage he judgeth to be most innocent and unblameable.

As for such as are riotous Persons, and after a profuse Manner immediately consume whatever is bestowed on them;

Such as are Atheistical and profane Wretches

Such as are constant Wanderers from Place to Place, can never settle themselves to any Trade or Labour, but love to live idly, and to do nothing.

Such as are bold and impudent Beggars, who if you refuse them what they ask, will be ready to abuse you for it.

The Charitable Man will be sure to pass these, and such as these are, by; and will give his Charity only to such as are meek and humble; such as shew some Sense of Religion, and of loving God; such as are sober and temperate; such as are willing to take Pains to get a Livelihood; such as can brook a Denial without giving bad Language; and such as will be sure to employ whatever is bestowed on them, to the best Advantage both of themselves and Families.

IV. The Charitable Man bears much Fruit, in that he contrives, that his Charity may be most reasonable as well as most useful to those on whom he bestows it.

He does not always give whenever the poor Man asks, nor whatever he asks of him. For he knows, that Poverty makes Men craving; and that such are not always the best Judges of what is most fit and convenient for them.

And therefore he considers their Circumstances by himself: And not only picks out such Times and Seasons, when he foresees that his Charity will be most welcome. But likewise, what to give, which he judgeth may be of greatest Use to them.

He denies their Requests sometimes, when they are most importunate; because he thinks, that at that Time his Alms would not do them the most Good. And when they are in great Extremity, and little think of him, he many Times surprizeth them with an unexpected Relief. And by that Means filling them full of Joy, he encourageth their Labour and Industry.

He rendreth them more thankful unto God, for raising them up such a Friend; and more willing to depend upon the divine Providence for the Time to come. They perhaps beg Money of him, and he thinks it much better to give them Cloaths, or to set them to work, or to give them Advice and Directions how, by their own Industry, to advance themselves.

V. The Charitable Man bears much Fruit, in that he never proposeth any By-ends or Designs to himself in the bestowing of his

Charity upon others. Some are so fond of Praise from others, that, like the *Pharisees*, they blow a Trumpet when they give their Alms. For they distribute them in the Streets, and in the most publick Places. They give them to such as are the most talkative, and who are sure to make their Benefactors the Subject of their daily Discourse.

And there are others who fancy that, by their Charitable Deeds, they shall merit the Pardon and Forgiveness of all their Sins, shall purchase Saintship, and greater Degrees of Glory for themselves.

But the truly Charitable Man is far from being guilty of any such Ostentation, or vain Superstition. He gives indeed sometimes in Publick, on purpose to engage others to do the like. But to shew that he designs nothing of popular Applause, he much oftner gives in secret: And many a poor Soul is the better for him, without knowing who is his Benefactor.

As for any kind of Merit, by giving of Alms, he wholly disclaims it. And professeth nothing to be his Intention therein, but the Welfare of his Neighbour, and the Glory of God.

VI. The Charitable Man is said to bear much Fruit, in that his Charity is constant, and he is always giving something whilst he lives, and has wherewithal to be helpful to such as stand in Need of his Assistance.

Some Men give only by Fits and Starts: They are seiz'd on a sudden with some melancholy Apprehensions: They feel perhaps some inward Stings of Conscience for their former Injustice

and Want of Mercy. And hence it comes to pass, that the Poor now and then get something from them.

There are others also, who, at some solemn Times, such as *Christmas* and *Easter*, give something, but nothing all the Year besides.

And there is a third Sort, who have not the Heart to part with any Thing before they die. But when they find that they must be forced to leave this World, they then perhaps, unless their Friends and Relations (who, like so many Vultures, stand hovering about their Beds) persuade them to the contrary, bequeath a Legacy or two to the Poor, of what they can keep no longer.

Now although it be a commendable Thing to do Good at any Time, and these are aⁿ fit Seasons of bestowing Alms; yet the truly Charitable Man is more constant in the bestowing of his. He does not know whether, if he should give his Alms only at such set Times, they may prove so useful as otherwise they might. And therefore he has always something in Bank, wherewith to relieve such proper Objects as are occasionally recommended to him. He is fearful lest his Legacies should be lost, or not dispos'd of according to his Mind and Intention. And therefore takes Care to distribute a good Part of his Charity with his own Hands. And is resolved not to want the Satisfaction of beholding what great Benefit and Comfort his indigent Neighbours reap from it.

VII. The Charitable Man may be said to bear much Fruit, in that he gives his Alms freely, and without the least Constraint or Compulsion.

Some give, because they see their Neighbours give, being loath to be upbraided for being singular. Others, by the Importunity of saucy Beggars, (who set upon them in the publick Places of Concourse, where a great many Eyes are upon them) are many Times shamed into a Compliance with their earnest Requests. Others being tender hearted, are melted into Compassion, by the Sight of pitiful Objects; such as broken Arms and Legs, and the like.

Now in all these, and the like Cases, there is something of Compulsion. And it too often happens, that he who gives in such Cases, gives at other Times nothing at all. But the truly Charitable Man needs not any such Force as this to be offer'd to him. He joins himself, of his own Accord, with all such as are zealous in the promoting of any Charitable Design. He often calls in at the poor Man's Door, and asks, How it fares with him. He keeps by him constantly a Catalogue of such as are in real Want; and, without being ask'd and entreated, sends them what Relief he can spare. And the more he can spare, the more joyful he is, and thinks no Money so well bestow'd, as what is given to his distressed Pensioners.

VIII. The Charitable Man may well be said to bear much Fruit, in that he often disposeth of his Charity after such a Manner, that the Effects thereof become perpetual.

It is, without doubt, a great Act of Charity to relieve the present Necessities of those who want; to feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, instruct the Ignorant, visit the Sick, and the like.

But

But he who is a truly charitable Man, if God has blessed him with a good Income, does not stop here. For he oftentimes makes Provision for Posterity, as well as for the present Poor, and gives to those whom he never can see, nor have any Knowledge of: Such are his wise Designs and Settlements, that he bears much Fruit, not only in his Life-time, but after his Death too; and the Effects of his Generosity, and of his earnest Desire to do others Good, are daily seen and admired by future Generations.

IX. And *Lastly*, The Charitable Man bears much Fruit, in that he is not only liberal himself, but endeavours, as much as he can, to make others liberal too. It is his constant Practice to represent Objects of Charity to those whom he knows to be capable of relieving them.

To shew them the Obligation of doing Good to others, the great Advantages of being Charitable, and to invite, exhort, and earnestly press them to go along with him in furthering all sorts of Charitable Undertakings; and to be as bountiful as their Circumstances will give them leave to be.

The truly Charitable Man has such right Apprehensions of this Duty, and of the many Benefits which thereby accrue to the World, that, in the Performance thereof, he does heartily wish that others were like himself; and does earnestly contend to render them, in this Respect, as much as in him lies, conformable to his own Example.

Having thus explain'd the Nature of the Charitable Man's Duty, when he is said to *bear much fruit*; I proceed to examine in the Second

Second Place, The Reasons laid down in the Text, why we ought to be thus Charitable, or to bear much Fruit: And they are these Two.

First, That God may be glorified.

Secondly, That we may shew our selves to be Christ's Disciples. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit; so shall ye be my Disciples.

First, We must be Charitable, that God may hereby be glorified. That it is the Duty of every Man to promote the Glory of God, is therefore manifest: Because the Glory of God is the chiefest Good; it being what God himself proposeth as the End of all his Actions: Because it is the best Instance we can give of our Gratitude towards God, for those many Favours and Mercies which he has thought fit from Time to Time to bestow on us. And *Lastly,* Because our own Interest is so much concern'd in it, God having promised to honour those who honour him.

Now the Ways by which the charitable Man glorifies God, are these which follow:

1. The Charitable Man glorifies God, in that, by his Charity, he testifies his Dependence upon him. Whatever doth illustrate, or set forth any of those Divine Attributes which are in God. Whatever does testify that Respect which is due from his Creatures towards him, does glorify God.

Now the Charitable Man, by giving away what he himself perhaps has earnt by the Sweat of his Brows, by lessening his own Estate, that others may have wherewithal to subsist, does thereby plainly own it to be in God's Power to afford him a fresh Supply of all Things that are necessary.

necessary for him ; and that it is much better to rely upon his Providence, than to place his Trust and Confidence in any worldly Enjoyments.

2. The Charitable Man glorifies God, in that, by being Charitable, he does fully testify his Obedience to God's Commands.

There is nothing which God has more strictly enjoin'd than Works of Charity. Both the Old and New Testament abound with Precepts concerning them. Whoever therefore is careful in the Exercise thereof, does glorify God, in that he thereby declares himself to be very observant of what God requires of him. And that he prefers Obedience to his Laws, before Riches, and the best Things which 'tis possible for this World to afford him.

3. The Charitable Man glorifies God, in that he expresseth his Kindness towards those, whom God declares himself to have a particular Regard for : We do then believe another to have a good Respect for us, when we observe him to love those whom we love ; and to do Good to such as are most near and dear unto us. And therefore may our selves be then said to have the greatest Value for God, and thereby to glorify him ; when we are liberal to the Poor, who are his chiefest Favourites ; whose Complaints he is at all Times ready to hearken to ; and upon whom whatever is bestow'd, he always reckons to be lent to himself.

4. The Charitable Man glorifies God, in that the poor Man is, by his Charity, excited to bless and praise God, as the Author of it.

When the poor Man, who was before Naked, feels himself warm with the Cloaths which were

were given him ; when he who was Hungry and Thirsty, has eat and drank, and is satisfied ; when he who had nothing wherewith to help himself, is supplied with the necessary Comforts of Life ; this must needs make him, if there be any Sense of Religion left in him, to look up to Heaven, and to bless the great Creator of all Things, for having raised him up such good Friends to take Care of him, and to allow him, out of their Abundance, enough to supply his present Wants.

5. The Charitable Man glorifies God, in that, by his good Deeds, he imitates and becomes like unto him. The more any one imitates, and is like unto God, the more does something of that Perfection which is in him, become visible to the World ; and in this the glorifying of him doth consist. The Charitable Man therefore glorifies God, in that, by studying to do all the Good he can in the World, he resembles him in that which is his most beloved Attribute, his Divine Goodness. For God delights to be always imploy'd in promoting the Welfare of his Creatures, and his *Mercy is over all his Works*.

6. And *Lastly*, The Charitable Man glorifies God in that, by his Example, others are excited to act as he does. When others observe how willing the Charitable Man is to part with his good Things, for the Relief of the Poor and Indigent, this will help to beget an Emulation in them to do the like. Now the more there is of any Sort of Virtue or Goodness in the World, the more is God glorified. And therefore, since the Charitable Man is oftentimes the Occasion of making others as bountiful as himself ; he in this

Respect

Respect also may very well be said, to promote the Glory of God.

And so much for the *First Reason* mentioned in the Text ; why we ought to be Charitable, *i. e. to bear much Fruit, viz. that God may be glorified.*

Secondly, We ought thus to *bear much Fruit*, that we may the more effectually shew our selves to be Christ's Disciples. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples.*

Now the being Charitable, will effectually shew us to be Christ's Disciples, in that we thereby punctually follow both his Directions and Example.

1st, By being Charitable, we shew our selves to be Christ's Disciples, in that we punctually follow his Directions. We cannot but observe his Duty of Charity to be in the Old Testament often recommended, and many Promises to be made there to those who practise it.

But under the Gospel, nothing is more frequently enjoyn'd. Our Saviour and his Apostles do every where press it, and denounce very severe Woes against such as are Covetous and Unmerciful : And therefore it is one of the most certain Indications of being in the Number of Christ's Disciples, to be very zealous in the Practice of it.

2dly, By being Charitable we become Christ's Disciples, in that we do thereby most nearly imitate his blessed Example.

He, out of pure Charity, although he was the only Son of God, did freely leave the Glories of Heaven, and part with all the Riches of Eternity,

ty, and, instead thereof, did voluntarily embrace Poverty and Want for our sake, that we, who were Poor, might be made Rich. He, all the while he was here upon Earth, went about doing Good; spent his whole Life in Acts of Mercy and Beneficence, and was constantly employed in relieving Mens Necessities of every kind. And therefore we must never pretend to be any Ways related to Him, or to be really and truly his Disciples, unless we are as Charitable as our Abilities will give us Leave to be, to all such as stand in Need of our Aid and Assistance.

Having thus considered both the Duty of bearing much Fruit by being Charitable, and likewise the Arguments wherewith our Saviour endeavours to enforce the Practice of it, I hope I shall not now have much need to be very urgent with you upon their Account, who, by me, do humbly solicit for your present Favour and Assistance.

For, would you give to the *Necessitous*? Behold those * who are truly such *viz.* little Children, wholly unable to help themselves, and having indeed, many of them, Parents, but such as have much to do, by their hard Labour, to provide them and themselves Bread.

Parents, who have scarce either Leisure or (what is deeply to be lamented) Skill to teach them the first Principles of Christianity.

How can you better bestow your Charity, than in providing for their Spiritual Wants, than in taking Care that their Souls may be fed betimes with that Bread which came down from Heaven?

Would

Would you be sure to bestow your Charity upon those only who are Virtuous?

Behold a little Croud of such as are purely innocent, of such, whose Minds are meer Wax, and therefore as well capable of receiving good Impressions as those which are bad.

Be but then so kind as to train them up the Way in which they ought to walk, and when they are Old they will not depart from it.

Lend them but your Help to afford them pious Education, and you will go a great way to preserve them in the same State of Innocency as long as they live.

Would you do Acts of Charity when they are likely to be most seasonable and useful?

Why, this is the most proper Season of doing these poor little ones the greatest Good.

There are no habits of Vice as yet settled within them: So that your Charity towards them at present, will not only *cover*, but *hinder* a multitude of Sins; will render these your Clients, not only examples of Virtue in this World, but likewise glorified Saints in the World to come.

Would you be assured of the Sincerity of your own Hearts, and that you don't give your Alms out of a Principle of vain Glory, and to be seen of Men?

How easie is it for you, to drop your Benevolence into the Balon after such a manner as no one but God and your own Conscience shall know what you give?

Would you be Charitable in such a way as that the effects of your Charity may be most durable and lasting?

Behold an Opportunity of mending future Ages, and of engaging your Posterity, and those who come after them, to call you of this Age --- The most Blessed of the Lord.

For by giving these poor Children a truly Religious Education, you provide a little Priest for every Family unto which each Child belongs, who is capable of reading Prayers, (and oh! that it was constantly practised in such a Family every Day!) of Instructing his little Brothers and Sisters in their Duty, and sometimes Parents too.

And when such a little Minister is transplanted into any other Family, he becomes there also a Teacher of Righteousness.

And as he grows older and older, will more and more effectually diffuse and propagate a Sense of God and Religion amongst those whom he converseth with.

So that by being Charitable this way, you will see no end of those Blessings which you bestow upon the World.

For by your Means True Christian Knowledge and Virtue will every Day more and more increase.

And the good Seed, which is now sown, will bring forth excellent Fruit; some Thirty-Fold, some Seventy, and some an Hundred, and this from Generation to Generation.

Don't then imitate those miserable Wretches, who, although they have large Incomes, yet

when

when solicited to extend their Bounty upon this and the like Charitable Account, are won't being worse than the Traytor *Judas*) to cry out, Why all this wast in giving to the Poor? But show your selves to be our Saviour's faithful Disciples and Followers, by bearing much Fruit in such a way as must needs be most acceptable unto God, because it tends so much to promote His Glory.

The Angels of these your little Clients do constantly *behold the Face of your Father which is in Heaven*, and therefore will be sure to enumerate before him your good Deeds towards them, and to relate what everyone gives to God on their behalf, and who gives nothing at all.

Don't then permit your rich Apparel, the Furniture of your Houses, the costly Entertainments at your Tables, your Expences at Coffee-Houses, and at Evening Clubs, to upbraid you with being niggardly in a Concern of far greater Weight and Moment.

But let these holy Exercises engage every one of us to come always prepared to further, either little or much, that Noble Design which they are set on Foot to promote; That so our Charity Schools may daily increase and multiply.

And those already Erected may be filled with a greater Number of Scholars, as well as provided with a better Income for their Support and Maintenance.

And here I cannot but observe, amongst other generous Contributors, what great Praises are due to those, especially of the meaner sort,

fort, who so freely part with a share of their Weekly Earnings, for the helping forward so pious a Work.

For what can be a more certain Indication of a true Christian Spirit, than out of a little to give a little, upon so Religious an Account?

O may their Copper-Offerings be restored to them again a Thousand-Fold!

O may the little Barrel of Meal, provided for the Sustenance of each of their Families, never wast, neither the Cruise of Oil fail.

And God grant, that such their Labour of Love, may provoke all those of an higher Rank, to give out of their Abundance, good Measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

That so both Rich and Poor conspiring together towards the furtherance, according to their Abilities, and as much as in them lies, of so God-like a Design; That ancient Prophecie of *Isaiah*, (*Isaiah XI. 9.*) concerning the Earth's being full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea, may be fulfilled in our Days.

And that our Saviour, for such their Charitable Deeds, may say unto them at the Last!

In as much as you were kind to these my little Brethren, you were kind unto me.

Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you.

